

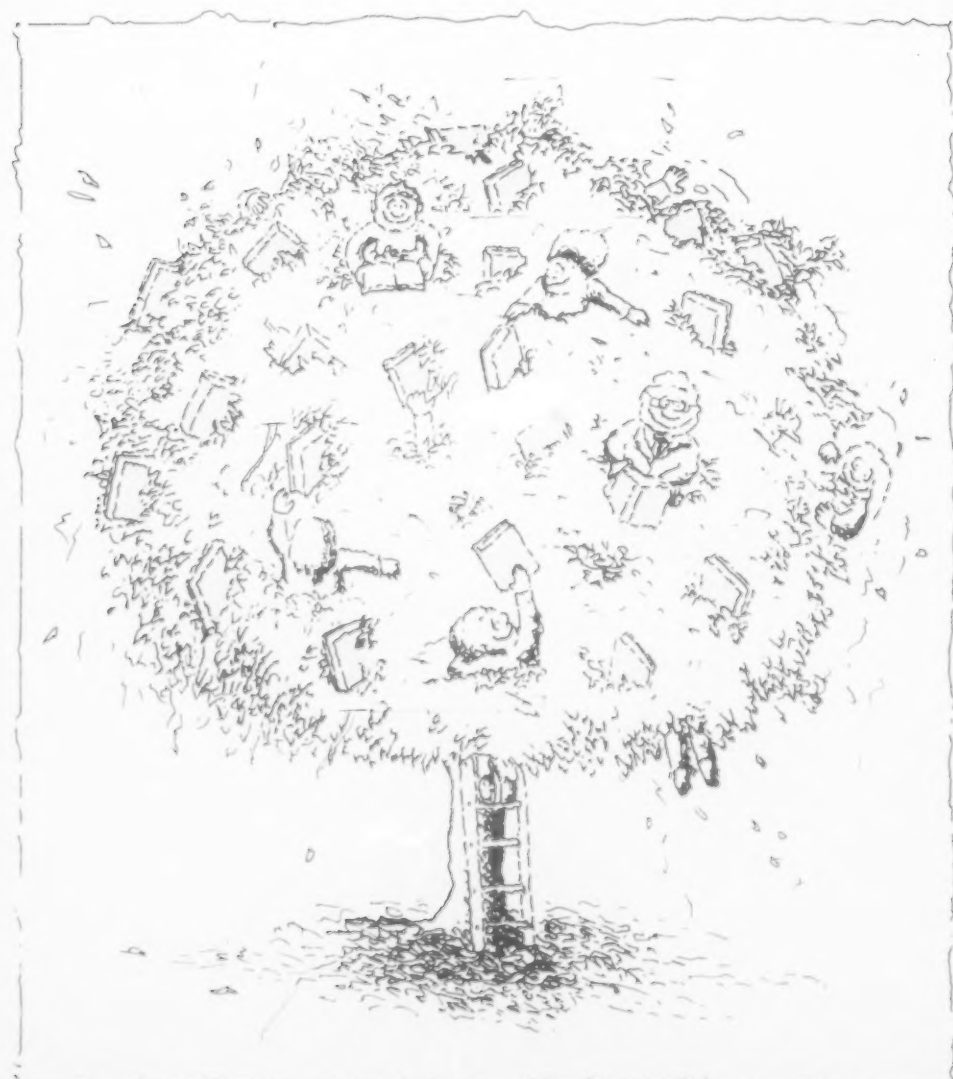
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CHILDREN'S
BESTSELLER
POSTER INSIDE

Small Publishing: Growing Up
Self-Publishers and New Presses • Inside The Chinook Bookshop
Children's Book Scene & Survey of Children's Bookstores

Publishers Weekly

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CHILDREN'S BOOK SCENE

EDITED BY DIANE ROBACK AND KIMBERLY OLSON FAKIH

A Special PW Survey: Selling Patterns in Children's Bookstores

A recent survey of children's booksellers across the country produced many interesting findings, which are summarized on these two pages. Conducted in August by the market research department of Cahners Publishing, the poll collected responses from 410 bookstores, 32.4% of which were general independent stores, 18.8% children's-only stores, 15.4% national chains, 8.3% regional chains, 10.2% specialty independent stores; 14.9% replied "other" or gave no answer.

The respondents reported an average of \$1,498,500 in total gross sales or revenues in 1987, with a corresponding average of \$108,154 gross revenues from the sale of children's books. The average allotment of total bookstore space devoted to chil-

dren's books was 34% (see bottom chart, next page); just two-thirds (61%) of this space was devoted to paperbacks, one-third (35%) to hardcovers, with 4% "no response."

Booksellers were also polled as to the bestselling *type* of children's books in their stores, based on age categories (see chart, below). The results, which are not surprising, have as much to do with price levels as with popularity of individual categories. Picture books, generally the highest-ticket items in a children's store or section, accounted for the largest share of bookstore revenues; next came books for younger readers (20%) and middle readers (19%); and the smallest percentages were for baby and toddler books and young adult books, at 17% each.

The lower sales for these two categories, when compared to picture books, is easy to explain. Most titles for babies and toddlers are relatively inexpensive; virtually all YA titles sold in a bookstore are in paperback, not hardcover; and these two categories encompass the narrowest spans of customer ages. Picture books, after all, can appeal to many age levels—and in many cases to adults.

Of the respondents, 98% considered the book's content the most important criterion in selling a children's book. This was followed closely by illustration (95%), author's reputation (94%), cover design and retail price (93% each); other factors were cited with less frequency (see top chart, next page).

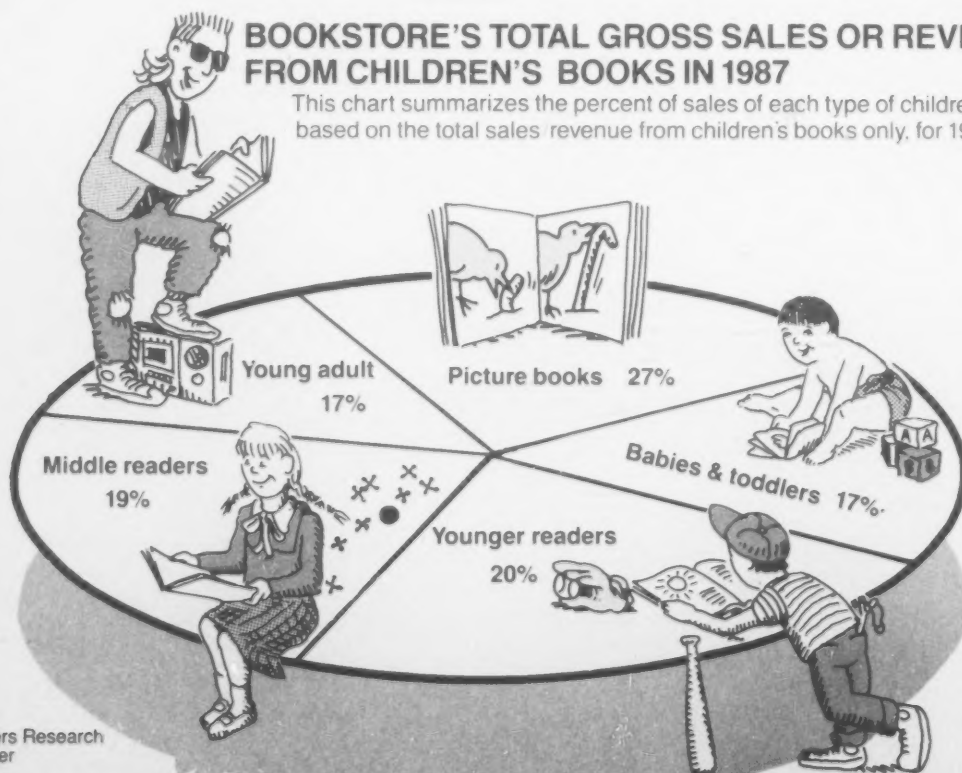
In accordance with industry projections of continued growth in this already booming area of publishing, 51% of the survey respondents plan to increase the number of children's book titles they carry within the next 12 months, while 20% plan to increase the amount of space allotted to children's books.

—D.R.

This is the first of what will be a series of surveys on children's publishing and bookselling.

BOOKSTORE'S TOTAL GROSS SALES OR REVENUES FROM CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN 1987

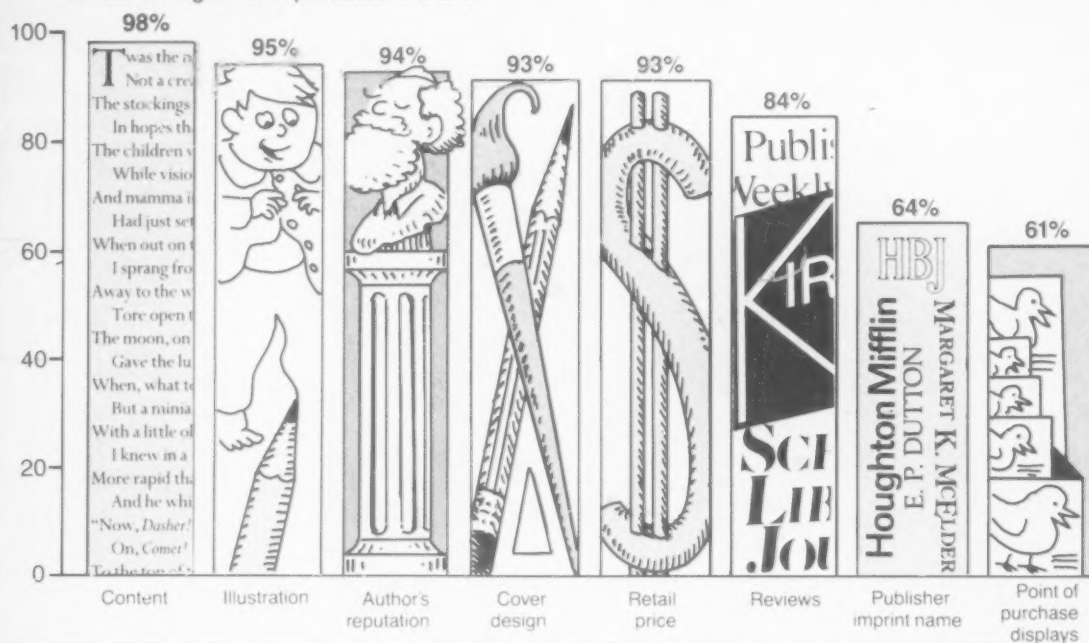
This chart summarizes the percent of sales of each type of children's book, based on the total sales revenue from children's books only, for 1987.



Source: Cahners Research
Art: Toby Rosser

IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA WHEN SELLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of specific criteria when selling children's books to their customers. This table summarizes the percentage of respondents who indicated that each criterion has some degree of importance to them.



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BOOKSTORE SPACE ALLOCATED TO CHILDREN'S BOOKS

